



Erie County Youth Bureau
810 East Ferry Street
Buffalo, NY 14211

Youth Bureau Chronicle

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A Letter from the Deputy Commissioner

Happy New Year! I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you for a successful 2014, serving over 10,000 youth and families in our community.

Erie County Youth Services Division experienced a year of raising the standard to excel and execute with greatness.

This upcoming year we are committed to providing positive youth development programming throughout our community, sharing experiences through networking and doing business different.

Many thanks to your continued efforts and contagious spirit in giving back to the youth and families we serve!

Gary Damon, Jr., MA, Deputy Commissioner—Youth Services

A Letter from the Youth Bureau Director

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and has survived this resurgence of the typical Buffalo winter.

In the few months since we last published this newsletter in which I introduced myself I have had a number of exciting, educating and inspiring experiences. The first few site visits I conducted at the end of 2014 almost forced me to resign and run back into the field. The agencies, community based organizations and local youth bureaus of Buffalo and Erie County are doing amazing work each and every day in the face of countless obstacles. I am keenly aware of these struggles and have every intention of staying as closely connected to the direct service provided to the youth of our community as possible. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting representatives of all ECYB funded agencies at our recent orientation and very much look forward to future encounters and further conversations.

I am excited to receive Primetime proposals and learn about the many innovative strategies which will be used to engage youth this summer. My hope is that we can all continue to forge, renew, and strengthen our relationships and partnerships with one another and carry the spirit of collaboration well into this new year and for many years to come.

Benjamin Hilligas, Youth Bureau Director



Access of WNY After-School Aims to Build Knowledge & Global Awareness

Access of WNY is in the process of transitioning to a fully-licensed after-school program. They are striving each day to introduce their youth to the ways of the community and the world at large. The hope is that each child who walks through the door will leave each day having learned something new and inspiring.



The main focus of the program is to help students complete their homework. The program operates Monday through Friday from 3pm-6pm. Most of the children who walk through the door are ESL-

deficient and have asked for a literacy center to help improve their experience at Access. The agency is well on its way to completing this project, as the need is imminent.

Celebrating culture is important; Access celebrates various national, religious and international holidays in hopes of introducing perspective to students. Field trips and 'Foods of the Month' are

becoming a staple in the program.

A recent field trip to St. Luke's Mission of Mercy served as a catalyst for self-awareness and impact on the community. Students from local universities have offered their support as tutors and mentors to youth. Students enjoy expanding their horizons, and developing their role as global citizens.

Madeline Torke, Access of WNY



Girl Scouts of Western New York Promotes Leadership Skills

Girl Scouts of Western New York brings Girl Scouting programs to girls and young women between the ages of 5 and 17. The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is a programming model designed to promote leadership skills throughout each step of Girl Scouting. The approach is based on research that indicates that girls respond to a more inclusive style of leadership, rejecting traditional "top-down" definitions of what it takes to lead. GSLE is built on the following three principles: Discover, Connect, and Take Action. Through activities that emphasize the discover principle, girls learn

that leadership is an act of self-discovery, and work to understand more about their own values and skills. During connect activities they recognize that a leader must be able to work with others. When the girls take action they understand the importance of leadership in making the world a better place. GSWNY is available to provide programming in a variety of settings such as; after school programs, community agencies and other youth-serving organizations.

Megan Ball, Girl Scouts of WNY



Local Youth Bureau In Action: Town of Hamburg Youth Bureau

The Town of Hamburg Youth Bureau is a branch of the Department of Youth, Recreation and Senior Services and includes two main components - an active youth volunteer program, Youth Engaged in Service (YES) and the Youthful Offender program (court assigned), according to Martin C. Denecke, director of the department.

The Youth Bureau is a busy place, run by Beverly Preischel, YES coordinator and Nicole Dayka, Youthful Offender Program Coordinator. Bev organizes a

large number of volunteers ages 12-17 who serve the community working with individuals with special needs, the elderly, and with local service organizations such as the Town of Hamburg Lions Club and Rotary Club of Hamburg.

Another service through the Youth Bureau is the Kids Clothes Closet overseen by Bev. Families in need can make an appointment to 'shop' for clothing collected year-round for children.

"Our two programs work together,

providing toys for local children through an annual toy drive in conjunction with the Western New York Holiday Partnership and assisted by YES volunteers," said Dayka, who oversees the toy drive.

Martin Denecke, Town of Hamburg



Kids Escaping Drugs Provides Critical Services to Adolescents

Kids Escaping Drugs (KED), located in West Seneca, was founded in 1987 in response to the growing need for services specifically for adolescents suffering from chemical dependency. Today, KED partners with Renaissance Addiction Services Inc, who provides the only residential treatment facility for adolescents in the region. Additionally, the Face 2 Face program gives families the opportunity for a no-cost early intervention and presents pro-active educational programming throughout the area's schools, community organizations and

businesses.

Peer-to-Peer Pro-Active Education Panels: Over 100 schools participated in 2013-2014, equaling more than 20,000 children and adults hearing the dangers and consequences of experimentation and addiction from a peer presenter.

No-Cost Early Intervention: One-on-one sessions for families of adolescents beginning to experiment. Peers in recovery partner with addiction professionals to combat experimentation.

The Summit-Annual Youth Leadership

Conference: Two regional conferences held annually to encourage the promotion of adolescent sobriety throughout our schools. Student leaders come together to develop year-round programs for their schools.

Residential Treatment: KED partners with Renaissance Addiction Services to support the Renaissance Campus, a 62-bed facility for boys and girls ages 12-20 suffering from chemical dependency.

Deanna Messinger, Kids Escaping Drugs

UB's Summer Academic Camp on Neighborhood Development A Hit

The goal of UB's summer camp is to change the negative perspective that residents have about their community by empowering students to do something about neighborhood conditions. Using a project-based teaching strategy, CND teaches students *critical consciousness* by showing them how to make improvements in their neighborhood. If students feel positive about the communities in which they live and if they believe they have the power to improve that community, we

believe their motivation for learning will be enhanced and this will result in more desirable academic outcomes.

CND is a six-week program that runs from 9:00am-3:00pm daily, and classes are held in the same classrooms that are used by UB Master of Urban Planning students. 22 students, representing 16 schools, attended the camp. All of the students lived in East Side neighborhoods.

Students worked on both a *graphic plan* project and a public art project. One project was a four-panel mural depicting the impact of violence on the community and ways to curb it. The second project was a statue, *The Peace Warrior Change Agent*, which symbolized the ability of human agency to end violence by recreating and transforming the community.

Gavin Luter, UB Center for Urban Studies

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ECYB Mission: “To serve youth and families through asset development and advocacy, prevention, and intervention programs that strengthen families and communities.”



[www2.erie.gov/
socialservices](http://www2.erie.gov/socialservices) or search
“Erie County Youth Bureau”

To find out more information on the agencies mentioned in this edition, please check out their websites below:

♦ Access of WNY

⇒609 Ridge Road, Lackawanna, NY 14218
⇒716-332-5901
⇒www.accesswny.org

♦ Girl Scouts of Western New York

⇒3332 Walden Avenue, Suite 106, Depew, NY 14043
⇒716-837-6400
⇒www.gswny.org

♦ Town of Hamburg Youth Bureau/Y.E.S.

⇒4540 Southwestern Boulevard, Hamburg, NY 14075
⇒716-826-2226
⇒www.townofhamburgny.com/youth_bureau/html

♦ Kids Escaping Drugs

⇒920 Harlem Road, West Seneca, NY 14224
⇒716-827-9462
⇒www.ked.org

♦ University at Buffalo Center for Urban Studies

⇒3435 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214
⇒716-829-2714
⇒www.centerforurbanstudies.com

